

Did You Know?

The Association of Retired Soil Conservation Service Employees at its annual meeting in Indianapolis, Ind., recognized Dr. Roy Grizzell, from Monticello, for his outstanding community service. In presenting the award Association President Tony Vrana of Seward, Neb., said, “ Dr. Grizzell is a doer, not just a passive person.”

An active Lions Club member, Dr. Grizzell has been involved in countless service projects and has served as District Governor and as Chairman of the Arkansas Council of Governors. He is a charter member of the Catfish Farmers of America and served on the Board of Directors. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the University of Arkansas School of Forestry and has been an Adjunct Professor at the College.

“Arkansas benefited by Dr. Grizzell’s contributions to natural resources conservation and is still benefiting from his daily contributions,” Vrana said.

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The Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management launched a new virtual e-training site, The Gov Online Learning Center, providing federal employees with access to online job training and professional information.

The E-Gov Web Site is accessible at www.golearn.gov.

A one-stop source, The Gov Online Learning Center, provides federal

employees the tools to improve their knowledge base and professional skills, and unifies training across federal agencies to increase government consolidation and efficiency.

All federal employees agency-wide now have the opportunity to enroll in the same online course like “Change Management: Adapting to Change” or “Advancing Your Service Expertise: Customer Service.”

Through a 3-D virtual learning center, www.golearn.gov connects federal employees to over 30 course programs, access to more than 50 electronic books and a resource center linking to libraries nationwide, reference guides and other training and development sites.

One virtual room, The Learning Management Office, enables agency supervisors to review the course enrollment, status and completion of their employees.

Other highlights of the Web Site include a “Search and Select” option, a secure user name and password, and a 24-hour help desk.

E-training, aided by this user-friendly site, assists in processes to increase retention, improve performance and heighten worker satisfaction.

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The new ICAMS is up and running at <https://icams.usda.gov>.

Users should not use the change their password or “Forgot your Password” function.

The password function is not working at this time and will be very complicated to change or fix.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
August
Aug. 20 -- East Central Area AACD Meeting, Gillette
Aug. 29 -- SE Area AACD Meeting, Monticello
September
Sept. 1 -- Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 5-6 -- RC&D Annual Meeting, Eureka Springs
Sept. 19-20 -- Management Team Meeting
October
Oct. 11-20 -- Arkansas State Fair
Oct. 14 -- Columbus Day
Oct. 16-17 -- Management Team Meeting
November
Nov. 11 -- Veterans Day
Nov. 28 -- Thanksgiving

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ARKANSAS CONSERVATION NEWS

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

Room 3416, Federal Bldg., 700 W. Capitol Ave., Little Rock, AR 72201

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Photo by Pat Hoeffken

Kalven Trice, state conservationist, meets with Mason Brown during a Farm Bill meeting in Brinkley. NRCS also presented meetings at Stuttgart and Lonoke to more than 100 people.

Arkansas gets \$450,000 for WHIP

Arkansas received \$450,000 for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program from the recently passed Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, the 2002 Farm Bill. “The WHIP projects we are funding will help private landowners improve wildlife habitat by undertaking projects such as establishing native plants, adding small wildlife watering sites, leaving food plots within fields, stabilizing streambanks and other activities,” said State Conservationist Kalven L. Trice. “Some of our landowners have been hoping to undertake these projects for months, or even

years, but this program has had very limited funding in the past. We are very excited to have these new conservation opportunities through the 2002 Farm Bill.” The 2002 Farm Bill increased funding for WHIP by 700 percent - from \$50 million in the 1996 Farm Bill to \$360 million during the life of the 2002 Farm Bill. Fifteen million dollars has been released for use between now and the end of September 2002. With the beginning of the new federal fiscal year October 1, 2002, an additional \$30 million will be made available nationally for WHIP projects.

State receives EQIP funding

Arkansas will receive \$4.2 million for farmland conservation from the recently-passed Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, known as the 2002 Farm Bill. Funds will be made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the central conservation program of the new Farm Bill. More widely known for its price support programs, this Farm Bill is also a historic piece of conservation legislation, said Trice. Conservation funding in this Farm Bill increased by 80 percent nationwide. The money will be used to accomplish goals on private land such as fighting erosion, improving air and water quality, enhancing wildlife habitat, thinning fire fuel loads, preventing flooding, and other conservation projects. “We recognize many farmers or ranchers who have applied for EQIP in the past may have become frustrated because they weren’t located in the program’s priority areas or because there wasn’t enough money,” Trice said. “While time and funding remain finite, I want farmers to know funds are no longer limited to priority areas and the additional money should help us work through our backlog of conservation needs on private farms and ranchlands,” he said.

New chief proud of having rare opportunity

It's an honor for me to be chosen by Secretary Veneman to be the chief of NRCS. When I arrived at my office two months ago, I looked at a display with the photographs of the 11 people who were chief before me. Those 11 leaders represent the tens of thousands of folks who have worked for NRCS and the Soil Conservation Service - those who provided the legacy that you and I have been asked to implement - the conservation ethic for working lands.

I couldn't help but swell with pride at having the rare opportunity to try to step into those very large shoes - to try to serve that legacy and provide that service to the taxpayer. Providing service to the working land is what this agency is all about.

NRCS is one of the most respected agencies in the federal government. In addition to being a farmer and rancher, I've worked around Capitol Hill for many years on a wide range of issues, from farm programs to conservation. I worked on conservation for many years early in my career and then moved into other areas. However, I have always relished the chance to come back to my first love, conservation.

Farm Bill

I am joining you at a very important time for our Agency - the implementation of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The new Farm Bill contains unprecedented support for environmental stewardship on America's private lands. It gives us the opportunity to implement win-win solutions, working in partnership with local conservation leaders, and with landowners, operators, and managers - the stewards of that land.

Implementing this new Farm Bill will

challenge all of us: major increases in conservation programs will greatly increase the workload for NRCS and our partners over the next five years. I know we are up to the challenge! As Secretary Veneman recently said, much of the implementation burden now falls to NRCS and FSA. We must renew our commitment to working hand in hand with the Farm Service Agency to get the job done. This kind of teamwork will be particularly critical as we implement this new Farm Bill.

It is also critical that, as we carry out the mandates of the new Farm Bill, we not lose track of the fundamental principles of conservation. The need for technical assistance has never been greater - to deliver the Farm Bill programs, to continue other program delivery, and to give landowners the general technical assistance they need. Conservation cost share and easement programs are tools to get conservation on the land. They are not the total answer. Technical assistance is essential to make programs work. Incentives coupled with technical assistance are the foundations for successful conservation efforts.

Congress also directed that implementation of the new Farm Bill provide for the use of third party vendors to expand the amount of expertise available to provide technical assistance. The concept is not new. We have worked with technical service providers for years. Our major role with third party vendors is to ensure landowners get quality technical services. NRCS will work with organizations or agencies in providing certification of their members or employees. Third party vendors are not a replacement for the traditional conservation delivery system.

Congress and the president have

placed a great trust in NRCS and the Conservation Partnership by approving these dramatic increases in our nation's conservation investment. With this trust comes the responsibility of putting this investment to work on the land in a cost-effective way. I know you will fulfill this trust, and I look forward to working with you as we all strive to implement the Farm Bill.

I'm honored to be your chief, and I look forward to working with you during the months and years to come. At NRCS, our most important asset is the hard working, committed people who comprise the agency. As my predecessors have noted - and I fully agree - our people are a national treasure. You have my assurance that, no matter what the challenge is regarding farm bill implementation, whether water quality, soil conservation, wildlife habitat, or other aspects of our mission, my commitment is to the employees of this agency, as well as the land we work to conserve, maintain, and improve; the landowners we serve; and the taxpayers of this fine nation.

I've always operated with an open door policy, and my door at NRCS is going to be open to you. I want to hear from you. I want to hear what's important to you as part of this agency - what you want to see happen and what you want to see changed. With your input, we can make this the best run, most efficient agency in all of government.



Bruce I. Knight
chief, NRCS

The Arkansas Conservation News is published monthly by the Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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All submissions are the property of NRCS and may be edited for content or space limitations.



Photos by Creston Shrum

Tony Stevenson (middle), state conservation engineer, discusses the Plum Bayou project with (left to right) Lu Wenhong, senior engineer, National Center of Irrigation and Drainage, Ministry of Water Resources, Beijing; Gu Yuping, deputy director and professor, NCID, Beijing; and Zhang Xiaohua, deputy general engineer, Zhejiang Institute of Hydraulics Estuary, Zhejiang Province.

Irrigation

Chinese officials visit Grand Prairie, Plum Bayou, Point Remove to learn how projects help environment farmers, wildlife



The group examines a pump stand riser installed for the Point Remove project.



(Above) Gu Yuping (left) and Zhang Xiaohua discuss the weir constructed in Blackwell Bottoms for the Point Remove project. (Left) The team of water management officials from China learn how the flume transports water to the farms.